

DEEP DEMOCRACY

INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE METHOD FOR A BETTER WORLD



Deep Democracy is a dialogue and decision making method that encourages diverse opinions to be expressed and respected in an inclusive, psychologically safe and connected way. This can be helpful for encouraging participatory decision making and inclusive culture change towards positive societal change.

Background

The Lewis Method of Deep Democracy was developed in South Africa in the 1990s during the transition from apartheid to democracy by Myrna and Greg Lewis. During that period, they were asked to help the South African electricity company with the transition to a more democratic way of working. There had to be more equality and the racial hierarchy had to disappear. They built this method on the work of Arnold Mindell's process oriented psychology. For more information about the founders and the background of this method, check out [this video](#).

How to use it

The methodology is broad in its application and can be used with small and large groups. Some helpful contexts it can be used include:

- Within organisational and societal change processes, to bring all voices along in the transition.
- When you want to come to an inclusive decision or facilitate a participatory decision making process (should we invest in this new project? What is the best outcome for the next 10 years?).
- Building team / group cohesion – also helps neutralise power dynamics within a team
- When there is polarisation within a group or between groups (democrats vs. republicans, Israeli and Palestinian conflict, marketing vs. finance ;)).
- As a coaching methodology – a method for group coaching, leadership development and collective wisdom, resonance.

Benefits for Deep Democracy

- Allows a group to connect individual stories, context, opinions and feelings that may be underlying their decisions, motivations and actions.
- Raises awareness for individuals about what aspects of a conversation impacted them on a deeper level or stood out, bringing unconscious feelings and opinions to the surface.
- Gives space for feelings and statements that may not otherwise be expressed.
- Helps prevent scapegoating or ostracising one or a few individuals within a group.
- Encourages more holistic decisions that includes and incorporates minority viewpoints.
- Allows individuals to see and experience the complexity of an issue.
- Helps decrease polarisation between individuals and groups.

Get started with an intro session

Ready to explore the appetite for a bigger transformation project within your company? Want to experience our work? We'll host a 2-hour introductory session in which you'll get a taste of Deep Democracy and how it can impact inclusive decision making and culture at your organisation.

About us

We are a social impact consultancy working at the intersection of leadership, culture and strategy. We help organisations rethink the future beyond themselves: to embed their impact ambitions in their strategic agenda and a living part of their daily leadership. We do this through strategic partnerships and experiential leadership and social change programs.

Contact us intouch@better-future.com

